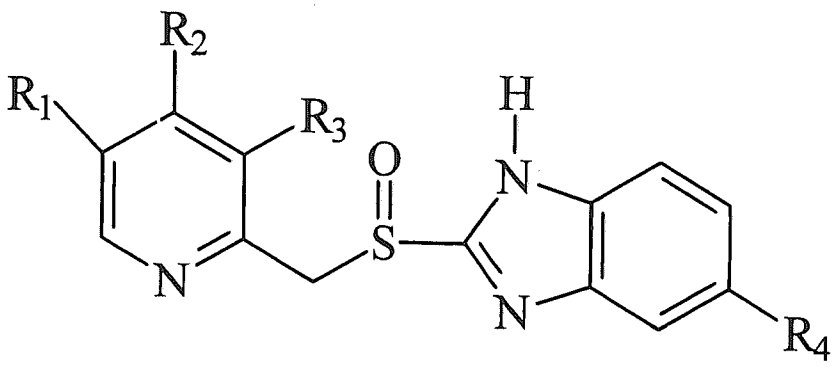
IN THE CLAIMS:

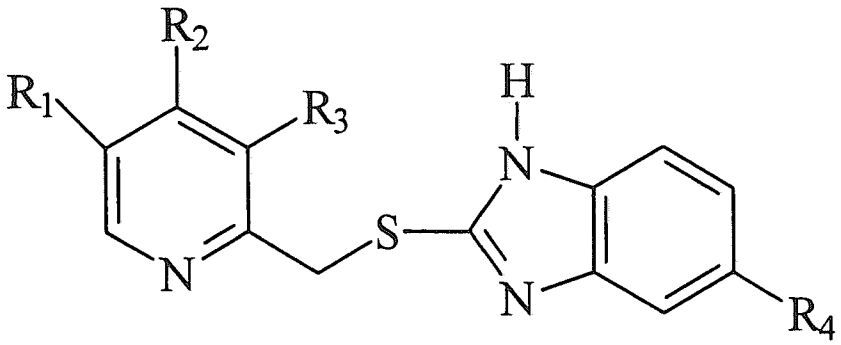
Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a sulfinyl compound of formula (I), or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt~~, hydrate or solvate~~ thereof,



(I)

which process comprises oxidation of a sulfide compound of formula (II)



(II)

wherein in both formulae (I) and (II) R_1 and R_3 are selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl or C_{1-4}alkoxy, R_2 is selected from the group consisting of substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-4}alkoxy and R_4 is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen or substituted or unsubstituted C_{1-4}alkoxy;

characterized in that an oxidizing agent comprising an aqueous alkali or alkali earth metal hypohalite solution, having a concentration in the range of 2 to 5% is added to a suspension or solution of a sulfide compound of formula (II) to form a reaction mixture, wherein a solution of an alkali or alkali earth metal hydroxide is present in the reaction mixture at least during the oxidation step, is added to a suspension or solution of a sulfide compound of formula (II) whereby the pH of the reaction mixture at least during said oxidation step is in the range of from 9 to 12, and optionally ~~converting~~ reacting a sulfinyl compound of formula (I) to a pharmaceutically acceptable salt~~, hydrate or solvate~~ thereof.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein a compound of formula (II) is reacted with an aqueous hypohalite solution in the presence of a catalyst selected from the group consisting of pyridine, di-isopropyl ethyl amine and N,N-dimethyl amino pyridine.

3. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, which comprises dissolving or suspending a compound of formula (II) in a solvent selected from the group consisting of water, lower alkyl alcohols, esters, ethers and chlorinated solvents, or a mixture of two or more of these solvents.

4. (Original) A process according to claim 3, wherein said solvent is selected from the group consisting of water, methanol, ethanol, isopropanol, di-isopropyl ether, dichloromethane, acetonitrile and ethyl acetate, or a mixture of two or more of these solvents.

5. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, which is carried out at a temperature in the range of -30 to 50 °C.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 5, which is carried out at a temperature in the range of 0 to 30 °C.

7. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein said alkali metal or alkali earth metal hypohalite is selected from the group consisting of sodium hypochlorite, sodium hypobromite and calcium hypochlorite.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 7, wherein said aqueous hypohalite solution comprises sodium hypochlorite.

9. Cancelled.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein in formula (I) R_1 represents methyl, R_2 represents trifluoroethoxy, R_3 represents hydrogen and R_4 represents hydrogen.

11. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein in formula (I) R_1 represents methyl, R_2 represents methoxy, R_3 represents methyl and R_4 represents methoxy.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein in formula (I) R_1 represents methoxy, R_2 represents methoxy, R_3 represents hydrogen and R_4 represents difluoromethoxy.

13. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein in formula (I) R_1 represents methyl, R_2 represents $OCH_2CH_2CH_2OMe$, R_3 represents hydrogen and R_4 represents hydrogen.

14-34. (Cancelled).